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Ref:/2021

Rainforest Team prepares for opening of processing plant

A management team representing Rainforest Seafoods Jamaica was on site at the Calliaqua processing plant in Calliaqua on Thursday 26th August, 2021 to get a firsthand look at the progress of the work being done. The new addition to the company's production sites will be opened later this year.

The team also met with over fifty persons being trained in fish processing by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines on Friday 27th August at the Methodist Church Hall, most of whom will be equipped to be employed at the processing plant in Calliaqua with the company. This initiative was geared at promoting the ideals and mission of the company and to positively engage everyone involved.

Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Saboto Caesar emphasized the importance of the Argyle International Airport in the process of exporting fish

abroad but more so to this new investment made by Rainforest. Minister Caesar added that there are now direct flights up to Miami International and soon there will be flights to Heathrow and the return of direct flights on air Canada, and New York.

Highlighting the opportunities and the possibilities that are taking place in St. Vincent, the Agriculture and Fisheries Minister stated that ‘there are always business men and women in the Caribbean who are looking for possibilities.’ Minister Caesar noted that the Jamaican company saw the opportunity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and decided to approach the private sector and the government.

Underscoring the importance of relationships, Minister Caesar pointed out that St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica are part of one region.

“We are united by a common history and based on that history we are going to create a trajectory for development and growth in this region.” The Agriculture Minister said, and also noted that Vincentians too can explore the endless possibilities that can be found within the region.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Minister stated that the mission of this venture is to create employment for one thousand persons each having

completely new jobs. Minister Caesar urged persons to take on greater challenges through a boat captaincy training programme that will be offered soon and revealed that it will be extended to both males but females.

Outlining that millions of dollars can be found in the blue economy, Minister Caesar explained that investment is a key factor to “harness the resources in our seas and in our oceans.” He stressed that training is a pivotal part of this process. The Minister reiterated that “quality must remain our watchword” and in an effort to develop a modern economy “we have to be the change” for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to become competitive globally; and this also means having extended working hours.

Chief Fisheries Officer, Jennifer Cruickshank-Howard expressed excitement on the new intake of young people working within the Fishing Industry and stated that the department has been advocating for the training of approximately one thousand persons in the industry.

Howard told the gathering that the fisheries division continues to work towards the development of a commercially viable industry with the support of the private sector; with conservation measures such as closed

seasons for some species, gear restriction, the banning of the harvesting a number of species including sea turtles and parrot fish.

CEO of Rainforest, Benjamin Jardim, expressed his elation and described the development of this processing plant as a fantastic venture for St. Vincent and the Grenadines noting that the possibilities are endless. Jardim disclosed that Rainforest Seafood was founded in 1995 as “a humble seafood retailer,” and has grown since then with a range of products. The Rainforest CEO noted that the primary production locations are Jamaica, Belize and soon to be St. Vincent. Jardim said, “We’re a family at Rainforest, and everywhere we go we treat it as such.”

“The goal is not just to sell but to add value, since in a competitive market within the seafood industry you must stand out, whether it is through the quality of product or variety.” Jardim said.

The facility in Calliaqua will be processing live and frozen lobster, sea cucumber, conch, and a wide range of fin-fish.